

Five Suggestions for Teaching Grammatical Structures

- **Form reinforces content.** Throughout the writing process, idea development is influenced by choices of grammatical structures within and among sentences.
- **Use the term *grammatical structures* rather than *grammar rules*.** Students need to focus on the structuring of ideas, not the memorizing of rules.
- **Emphasize a limited number of grammatical structures and editing conventions at any one time.** Address more throughout the school year.
- **Each class is different.** Only through analysis of your student writing can you determine which grammatical structures and conventions you need to teach each year. Depth, not breadth is foremost.
- **Learning to write well is like learning to paint well:** the study of the masters and daily practice, including sentence modeling, is essential.

In Constance Weaver's *The Grammar Plan Book* (2007), the following ideas are suggested for implementing these five thoughts.

A Framework for Teaching Grammatical Structures

1. Share a mentor model from the following possible sources: literature previous student or a current student created by you, the teacher, in anticipation of this lesson composed by you, the teacher, during the class spontaneously
2. Create another sample: First by the teacher and next by the teacher and students together

3. Practice composing the sentence in small groups or pairs and discuss as needed.
4. Students compose a sentence or sentences individually and report out and share.
5. Have students use the new grammatical structure in their own draft writing piece.
6. Provide a checklist for students to include the sentence structure in their final revision or in the editing stage.
7. Plan for peer feedback and/or teacher feedback.
8. When the need arises, re-teach the grammatical concept using different mentor samples.